

Holmleigh Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100257
Local Authority	Hackney
Inspection number	307341
Inspection dates	10–11 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Gulshanbir Kayembe

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Susan Brocklebank
Headteacher	Mr Kevin Ward
Date of previous school inspection	31 March 2003
School address	Dunsmure Road London N16 5PU
Telephone number	020 8802 7420
Fax number	020 8802 3701

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school serves a very ethnically diverse community in Hackney. The proportion of pupils taking free school meals is very high. Over 90% of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and nearly two thirds speak English as an additional language, which is very high. Most of these pupils begin school with little or no English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is average but increases as pupils move up the school. Most of these difficulties relate to literacy and some to emotional and behavioural needs. A very small number of pupils have a disability. The proportion with a statement of special educational need is below average. Attainment on entry to the Nursery is very low, especially in literacy. The school has had some recent staffing difficulties in the Foundation Stage.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. A rich learning environment not only supports pupils' academic development exceptionally well but also helps to secure excellent personal development and well-being. Pupils grow into mature, confident and self-assured youngsters by the time they reach Year 6. These qualities, together with the excellent progress they make in English and mathematics, prepare pupils extremely well for their next step in education and future life.

Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage. From very low starting points they make good progress, though standards remain below average by the end of Reception. Most pupils make exceptionally good progress as they move through Years 1 to 6. Progress is particularly outstanding in Year 6 where pupils now reach standards that are in line with national averages in English, mathematics and science. The success of the school, including its rapidly improving performance over the last few years, is down to excellent leadership. The headteacher sets the tone for the school and expects nothing but the best for pupils in his care. He receives outstanding support from the senior leadership team.

High quality teaching engages pupils' interests and encourages them to enjoy their learning. A diverse mix of support staff, recruited for the wide range of skills they bring, make a very important contribution to the school's work and especially to the personal and academic achievements of pupils. Those with English as an additional language or additional learning needs make significant progress because of the help they receive, both from support staff and their class teachers. Provision in these areas is very well managed so that there is a close match between the needs of individual pupils and the support they receive. Subject leaders keep a close eye on pupils' standards and progress as they move through the school. They continually develop and improve provision in their areas so that it best meets pupils' needs. Governors provide good oversight of the school's work.

An outstanding curriculum is a strong contributory factor in pupils' excellent spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. Pupils learn to get along with one another and appreciate and respect one another's varied backgrounds. They are thoughtful and reflective when giving their views. Exposure to an exceptionally wide range of visits and visitors inspires pupils' love of learning. They demonstrate mature understanding of healthy eating and enthusiastically adopt wholesome lifestyles. The strong ethos of care ensures that every pupil is highly valued and exceptionally well supported and looked after. Consequently, pupils feel happy and safe. They make a very strong contribution to the local and wider community. Pupils' work is very well assessed and information from assessment skilfully used to inform future planning and provide individual support where it is needed most. Pupils know their targets and how they can improve their work. They are becoming increasingly involved in assessing their own work.

Given the significant improvements in pupils' performance, the school has excellent capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

By the end of the Reception year children attain average standards in knowledge and understanding of the world, and physical and creative development. Though their progress is good in literacy and numeracy, standards remain low in these areas. Teaching is good. Lessons are well planned with good opportunities for children to make choices as well as to participate

in sessions directed by teachers. Very good attention to personal development means children often make very good progress in this. Relationships are good. However, work is not always well matched to needs and pace is sometimes slow. A good curriculum ensures that children have work of a practical nature covering all areas of learning well. Activities are usually well organised and structured, and encourage good engagement. Bilingual staff provide very good support for beginners in English. Support for children with learning difficulties is equally good. Assessment and recording are appropriate, though not always detailed enough. With support from the headteacher, the area is well led and staffing difficulties effectively managed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure lessons in the Foundation Stage are consistently well paced and work well matched to differing needs so that children make even better progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Results in 2007 were amongst the school's best, with those in Year 6 being in line with national averages. Results in Year 2 were below average but a considerable improvement on their very low starting points. Current standards in Years 2 and 6 are broadly in line with national averages. Given the very low attainment on entry, the standards attained by the end of Year 6 signal outstanding achievement. Pupils with English as an additional language make rapid strides in developing their speaking skills. They very successfully improve reading and writing skills especially in Years 3 to 6. Able pupils make at least good progress and increasingly make rapid progress because the school now tailors work more effectively to their needs. Pupils in Year 6 are on track to perform better at the higher levels than in previous years. Low attainers and those with learning difficulties benefit from the wide range of support they receive. Consequently, they make excellent progress and attain very creditable results many reaching standards that are in line with, or close to, age-related expectations.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' immense enjoyment of school is evident in their outstanding behaviour and enthusiasm for learning. They feel secure at school and know how to stay safe. Although attendance is close to average, this represents good achievement given the circumstances of many pupils.

Pupils feel that they are influential in guiding the work of the school. They have a strong sense of responsibility for the welfare of others. Members of the school council are proud of their work including innovative measures to raise awareness of healthy eating. Pupils talk knowledgeably about the effects of being overweight and show excellent understanding of the importance of exercise and healthy eating.

Pupils are sensitive to other's needs and enjoy learning about one another's backgrounds. They say that being in a school where people come from all over the world helps them understand each other and that, 'it expands our thinking'. Pupils' mature attitudes and their ability to work co-operatively together make a significant contribution to their learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Excellent relationships are the foundation for exceptionally good learning. Teachers have high expectations of pupils. Planning is of high quality and learning objectives are both very succinct and clear, hence informing pupils' learning. Lessons are well organised and pupils are skilfully managed. Support staff make an outstanding contribution to pupils' learning both in lessons and when taking small groups for additional or more focused tuition. Activities are well structured and interesting. Very occasionally, opportunities are missed to further stretch the most able but in most lessons these pupils are challenged well. In the best lessons, questioning is excellent and assessment is used exceptionally well to challenge individual pupils and push them to the limits of their abilities. Marking is good and usually provides clear pointers for improvement. Some teachers are making very good use of checklists to help pupils assess their own work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is thoughtfully planned and makes a significant contribution to pupils' academic and personal development. It is exceptionally well adapted to the needs of individuals, enabling most to make outstanding progress. Meticulous planning for pupils who speak English as an additional language and those with additional learning needs enables them to access the curriculum. Links across subjects are imaginatively exploited to make learning enjoyable and meaningful. Visitors with specialist skills share their expertise with pupils and help them aspire to excellence. A wide variety of after school clubs, competitive sports and visits out provide further enrichment which pupils say, 'help us learn about our subjects'. A strong secondary transfer process helps pupils to move on with ease to the next stage of education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pastoral support is excellent and underpins the school's positive promotion of learning. Staff know their pupils well and pupils are confident that there is an adult to turn to if worried or concerned. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements. The school draws on a wide range of agencies and external professionals to support individual pupils, including those with behaviour needs. The partnership with parents is strong and parents are fulsome in their praise of the school. Home-school visits for children joining the Nursery make them feel welcome and help them to settle quickly. Such visits also form part of a highly rigorous and successful strategy to improve attendance.

Systems to guide pupils' work and help them understand how to make it better are very good. Pupils are becoming increasingly involved in reviewing their targets with staff, assessing for themselves how well they are doing and identifying their next steps in learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher provides excellent leadership. He has established a very strong sense of common purpose and teamwork amongst staff and governors. Pupils' personal and academic development is at the heart of every new initiative and innovation. The leadership team works exceptionally well to establish systems and frameworks that guide the work of the school. Systems for monitoring how well it is doing are rigorous and exceptionally well used to inform future planning. Pupils' progress is tracked very thoroughly and tailored support provided for all those who need it. Subject leaders are thoughtful and reflective about how their areas are developing and have a positive impact on pupils' learning. Governors work well in partnership with the school and are improving their monitoring roles.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

20 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holmleigh Primary School, London, N16 5PU

We enjoyed visiting your school and especially enjoyed talking to you. We would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome. Your school gives you an outstanding education and you make enormous progress. As a result, you reach the right standards by the time you are ready to leave and are very well prepared for your next school.

These are some of the best things about the school.

- You enjoy immensely the wide range of lively and varied activities available to you, including the many visits out and visitors to the school.
- You make an excellent contribution to the school community through the jobs you do around school and your work on the School Council.
- Pupils who find learning difficult and those who are learning English as an additional language do very well.
- You show high levels of respect for others and work together exceptionally well.
- The staff are excellent in the way they work with you and help you to learn.
- Your headteacher does his job outstandingly well.

The only area for improvement is to make sure that lessons for children in the Foundation Stage are brisker and that the work they do is pitched at the right levels for all the different ability groups.

It was very nice to meet you and talk with you. We wish you well for the future.

Gulshan Kayembe

Lead Inspector